

CRUCIAL DEFICIENCIES OF REGIONALISM¹

By WALTER M. KOLLMORGEN²

United States Department of Agriculture

Regionalism holds little promise of productive application in the political field in this country. There are numerous reasons for this, but only the following few will be considered in this paper: (1) regionalism ignores present-day trends towards collectives and functional groups, which exhibit little or no "regional" quality; (2) regionalists do not exhibit accumulative experience and knowledge or unity of purpose or method; (3) the essence of regionalism, like that of nationalism, is psychic, and even the most serious advocates of regionalism have failed to examine or portray the quality of the regional spirit which may or may not be worthy of political expression; (4) regionalists have failed to exorcise the bogey of sectionalism; (5) regionalists have failed to list categories of problems that can be handled better on the regional level than on any other level; (6) regionalism runs counter to technological aspects of society which are universal and dominant and will eventually prevail over discordant folkways, which regionalists may try to perpetuate.

Before examining the shortcomings of the proposals of regionalists, a brief statement of definitions of regions is necessary. In an attempt to find a common ground here the literature on regionalism is more revealing than standard dictionaries. Dictionaries may define a region merely as "a large tract of land; indefinite area; a district; tract, etc." Regionalists, however, attribute more definite qualities to regions. Perhaps the most helpful suggestions concerning the nature of regionalism are found in Chapters 11 to 14 of *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development*, published by the National Resources Committee in 1935. After soliciting definitions from a number of prominent geographers, the writers conclude that there are single-factor regions, administrative regions, and composite regions. Single-factor regions include soils regions, vegetative regions, climatic regions, and others that are useful devices in research, teaching, description, and partly for planning. Singly, these do not form the basis for regionalism. The second type, administrative regions, includes Federal Reserve districts, Internal Revenue districts, reclamation districts, and others. These are largely spacial arrangements made for the sake of convenience and like the first type do not form important bases for regionalism. The third

¹ While the writer is on the staff of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, the statements and opinions presented in this paper are entirely his own.

² Many helpful suggestions in the preparation of this paper were received from Robert W. Harrison and from my sister, Johanna.

type, composite regions, is defined as "areas of unity and homogeneity measured in terms of several or many factors." Unity and homogeneity are applied to both physical and cultural factors, and the latter clearly includes psychic qualities.³

The alleged quality of psychic unity is important because in its absence regionalism becomes merely a device to administer affairs in variously delimited geographic areas occupied by citizens who feel no common bond of tradition or purpose. The proof of psychic unity would lend to regionalism a strong practical basis, whatever its other attributes. In the absence of psychic unity regionalism becomes pointless and loses its academic and political appeal.

With these premises in mind, the above listed deficiencies of regionalism will be examined.

I

Modern industrial society is characterized by individuals acting through collectives and functional groups, which respond to the rational demands, purposes, and interests of the groups which compose them. These collectives and functional groups are formed by the free choice of individuals who have common purposes in view—purposes which usually encompass economic ends. As society becomes increasingly secular and industrial, economic ends become more compelling, and for this reason our society is becoming increasingly compartmentalized into various producing groups, marketing groups, consumer groups, and service groups. There is little evidence that these various groups fall into consistent geographic patterns, which in turn might support forms of regionalism with economic and political implications.

Functional or interest groups operate in all lines of economic endeavors and many thousands of them are in existence in the United States. They range from small local co-operative processing plants to powerful national labor organizations. Even on the national level there are many hundreds of these groups, and few of them fall into a consistent regional pattern. This is well illustrated in a compiled list of national organizations with permanent representatives in Washington, where the exercise of influence is becoming increasingly important. Such a list is presented in Monograph 26, *Economic Power and Political Pressures*, prepared by the Temporary National Economic Committee of the 76th Congress (Washington, 1941). A great many organizations, national in scope, are not included; nevertheless, the report lists 383 organizations, the first dozen of which are the following:

³ See also Howard W. Odum and Harry Estill Moore, *American Regionalism* (1938), Ch. I, and Harry Estill Moore, *What is Regionalism?* (Southern Policy Papers, No. 10, University of North Carolina Press, 1937), pp. 8, 13.

Air Line Pilots Association
Air Reserve Association of the United States of America
Amalgamated Wage-Hour Bureau
American Academy of Accountancy
American Action
American Association for the Advancement of Science
American Association for Economic Freedom
American Association of Independent Small Business
American Association of Junior Colleges
American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
American Association of Museums
American Association of Nurserymen

Organizations listed under other letters of the alphabet are equally varied in interest and geography.

Although functional interest groups are commonplace and ubiquitous in our society, there is no reason to believe that they have reached their peak in numbers or in influence. In some sections of our country there are still large numbers of rural people who linger at or near the subsistence level of living. As these people are drawn more and more into the stream of commercialized activity they will inevitably face problems of production, marketing, and buying that will lead to collective interest and action. Realism and self-interest will find expression in organization to seek group consideration. Obviously, the emergence of special interest groups leads to a decline in geographic and folk consciousness. For example, farmers A and B may be neighbors, one producing butter and the other cotton. A joins a butter association, closely identifying himself with butter producers in all parts of the country; B, on the other hand, joins one or several cotton associations, and so identifies himself with a group which produces some products that compete with butter. A conflict in interest here is not only apparent but real. This is the pattern and the trend in all emerging and functioning industrial societies.

Recent trends in our economic history have served to stimulate the formation of collectives and functional groups. Our early frontier economy was governed largely by effective market demands and was relatively free of regulations and restrictions. More recently, however, production and price controls, with their many implications for producers and consumers, have become rather commonplace. Most of these regulations and controls operate within a federal framework, with the result that more and more interest groups look to Washington for favorable legislation and controls of various kinds.

The emergence and development of the present-day industrial

society, with its interest in individuals and their action in collectives and functional groups, have been well described by historians, anthropologists, and sociologists.⁴ Recorded history goes back well beyond the day of these groups. Prior to their development, man lived in an irrational, sacred society which offered few opportunities for individual choices. In fact, the individual as we know him today did not even exist in the primitive or tribal society. Kahler in his helpful *Man the Measure* writes: ". . . human history appears as an evolution leading from the pre-individual community to the post-individual community, through the development and completion of the individual."⁵ In the preindividual society man was an integral member of a clan, species, tribe, community, polis, or feudal fold, all of which were dominated by sacred orders, which embodied common traditions, customs, habits, and rituals. In this setting, man had no distinct feeling of individuality and no realization of an individual self. In this stage of "organic and psychological solidarity" the tribal members had no life of their own "beyond the pale of their species."⁶ Individual choices were largely taboo, and identification with the community was complete and absolute. As Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin point out:

Under such circumstances there is a natural collective responsibility and collective consciousness. The fault of a member is the fault of the community; the achievements of a member are the achievements of the community; the community rather than the individual is the social unit that bears the responsibility. The community engulfs the individual and makes him an integral part of itself.⁷

It is in the transition from the sacred to the secular society that the postindividual evolves—an individual who recognizes his identity as separate and distinct from that of his fellow man. In this change traditions, customs, and rituals are relegated to the background and the individual is confronted with rational choices. In the absence of tribal or communal security, the individual finds it expedient and at times imperative to become identified with numerous organizations or collectives. This is the modern collective order of our industrial society with its multitudes of functional groups. As Kahler states:

In primitive participation the species or the tribe precedes the individuals; in modern communism the individuals precede the collective. Thus we must consider the primitive tribe as an independent entity which has a mystical effect upon the whole emotional existence of its members. The tribe produces its individuals but is not derived from them. The modern collective is built up by rationally conceived outward aims that individuals have in common.⁸

⁴ Pitirim A. Sorokin, Carl C. Zimmerman, and Charles J. Galpin, *A Systematic Source Book in Rural Sociology* (1930), Vol. I, Part II; Ferdinand Tönnies, *Fundamental Concepts of Sociology* (*Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*) translated and supplemented by Charles P. Loomis (1940); Erich Kahler, *Man the Measure* (1943).

⁵ P. 21.

⁶ Kahler, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 326.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, pp. 39-40. See also J. H. Kolb and A. F. Wileden, *Special Interest Groups in*

The full transition from a sacred to a secular society is by no means an accomplished fact in this or any other country. Qualities and characteristics which were common to the feudal tribe, polis, or feudal fold are still discernible in our present-day society, varying in intensity among classes and among places. It is natural and even imperative that much of the past remain with us if we wish to manage our affairs smoothly and effectively. However, the number of individual choices and selections which confront us today far surpass those of the past, and their existence implies a collective society.

The above analysis is presented because of the implication it carries for the regionalists. Regionalism assumes certain psychic qualities which are closely related to the ideals of the clan, the community, and the tribe, as well as to nationalism. These are built on a core of irrationalism, as has often been pointed out. This statement may well be denied in part, particularly insofar as it applies to regionalism. Proponents of regionalism, however, have failed to portray a realistic picture of the psychic qualities of the regional mind which is anything other than irrational. This point will be given further consideration later, but it seems proper to point out here that some of the earliest and most insistent proponents of regionalism were French poets and writers who wished to preserve the local customs, festivals, and folkways in the French provinces from the leveling influences exerted by the city of Paris. To preserve customs, festivals, rituals, and dialects they proposed to decentralize the government and to establish regional universities. The latter apparently were to perpetuate regional truths, for, as one French writer pointed out, there are "Lorraine, Provençal, and Breton truths."⁹

Many interesting parallels can be drawn between the regionalist movement in France and in this country, but time limitations forbid such an effort here.¹⁰ The important point to emphasize here is merely

Rural Society (Univ. of Wis. Agric. Exp. Stat. Res. Bull. No. 84, Madison, Dec., 1927). Sorokin, Zimmerman, and Galpin report: "In 1920 Kolb thought he found cumulative communities in Wisconsin; in 1925 he was sure that such did not exist." *Op. cit.*, p. 331. This conclusion should be of special interest to regionalists in that psychic unities are commonly attributed to both regions and rural communities. See, for example, Lucien Brocard, "Regional Economy and Economic Regionalism," *Annals* (American Academy of Political and Social Science), July, 1932, pp. 81-92. The emergence of functional and interest groups in our rural society has brought much frustration to those still looking for the rural community in all rural settings.

⁹ Hedwig Hentze, "Regionalism," in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. XIII, pp. 208-218. This statement is reminiscent of George Fitzhugh's *A Sociology for the South*, which was written about a century ago. Harry Wish, in *George Fitzhugh: Propagandist of the Old South*, points out that this Virginian was one of the most vigorous and able defenders of slavery and the southern way of life.

¹⁰ See, for instance, Hedwig Hentze, "Regionalism," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Vol. XIII, pp. 208-218; Donald Davidson, *The Attack on Leviathan* (1938), and "Where Regionalism and Sectionalism Meet," *Social Forces*, Vol. 13 (Oct., 1934), pp. 23-31; also *I'll Take My Stand*, by Twelve Southerners (1930). Hentze refers specifically to Mistral,

that in the continuum from the sacred to the secular society, or from the preindividual to the postindividual society, regionalism finds its setting in the former rather than in the latter society and proposes to build permanent institutions on social qualities which are disappearing. Because of the transition now in progress, regionalism already takes on many of the aspects of a form of antiquarianism. Its vision lies in the past, not in the future.

II

A second major deficiency of the regionalist movement is that its advocates have failed to exhibit accumulative experience or knowledge and have shown no unity of purpose or method. This deficiency becomes the more striking when it is recalled that this movement finds its most ardent advocates among literary men and academicians. Certainly proponents such as these should be familiar with the tools of research and be aware of the need for building up a body of data and knowledge that is clear and consistent. This fundamental requirement has not been met in this country; in fact, mounting literature on regionalism only makes the subject more confused.

One of the problems confronting the advocates of regionalism is the amorphous name of the movement. The failure to endow the name "regionalism" with any specific meaning leads to all manner of misunderstanding and confusion of purposes. Naturally this has led to a situation in which regionalism is proposed as a solution of every conceivable kind of problem. The report of the National Resources Committee referred to above recognizes this fact in the categories of types of regions it describes. As pointed out above the regionalist movement is based on "composite regions," which should exhibit an observable degree of homogeneity in physical and cultural factors and should demonstrate a high degree of psychic unity.

A number of contributors to this planning report point out that a watershed usually does not meet the requirements of a composite region and therefore is a poor and unsuitable area for regional planning. Some of these contributors refer specifically to the Tennessee Valley which, they say, does not meet the requirements of a region. On the other hand, numerous quotations can be gathered from the same publication which treat the TVA development as a form of regionalism. Such an indiscriminate use of the word "regionalism" cannot serve any other purpose than to confound and confuse those who advocate government

an outstanding French regionalist and poet of the nineteenth century, who "lamented the subjection of the much more cultured south [in France] by the 'barbarians' of the north and above all the fact that this fusion of the north and south went beyond the stage of our *état fédératif*." Pp. 210.

planning and decentralization, or deconcentration. The TVA represents an effort of areal planning and decentralization; it is not a regional organization. The fact that water runs down the many slopes of a river basin does not make a region of such a basin.

Although it appears that some effort was made to use the terms "region" and "regionalism" with some discrimination in *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development*, subsequent publications by the National Resources Planning Board show an easy forgetfulness of the progress that was made in formulating helpful definitions and concepts. This is shown in its planning reports (Parts I, II, III, and XII) dealing with the Pacific Northwest, the St. Louis Region, New England, and the Arkansas Valley. The Arkansas Valley certainly fails completely to encompass what may be considered an acceptable or a plausible region. This valley reaches from the lowlands of the Mississippi Delta to the Southern Rockies. In this basin there is neither physical homogeneity nor cultural homogeneity, and no psychological unity has ever been attributed to the people who live in this watershed. Similar questions can be raised about the other reports. Those who would promote the cause of regionalism would do well to insist upon a more discriminate use of terms.

Failure to benefit by accumulative experience in dealing with the concept of regionalism is demonstrated by the great number of publications and reports on the subject which show little consistency in purpose, approach, or essential definitions. The great majority of them cannot forego the temptation to refer to the TVA as a fine example of regionalism.¹¹ Some articles further assure the reader that the Tennessee Valley is a physical, economic, and social unit.¹² After this bland assurance, the writer may advocate some form of urban, watershed, or national regionalism, or even continental or hemispheric defense measures—all in the name of regionalism.¹³

¹¹ Among these is the noted Julian Huxley, who in his recent book *On Living in a Revolution* (1944) repeatedly refers to the Tennessee Valley as a region (pp. 139-146, "Tennessee Revisited: The Technique of Democratic Planning"). Unlike most other regionalists, however, he does not want to preserve alleged distinct psychic unities or cater to them; he wants to create them. He writes (p. 143): "This scheme is still young, but it should be of real value in generating a social self-consciousness in the region and relating it to the central authority, which otherwise might remain in Olympian detachment from popular feeling."

¹² For example: "The TVA is concerned primarily with a natural geographic, economic, and cultural area, the Tennessee River watershed, although certain of its activities extend far beyond the boundaries of that area." Quoted from "Relation of Federal Regional Authorities to State and Local Units," author anonymous, *Annals* (American Academy of Political and Social Science), Jan., 1940, p. 130.

¹³ In 1927 Lewis Mumford wrote: "The prime use of a region is to capture sunlight and to convert it into forms that are useful for animal and human existence." *Sociological Review*, Oct., 1927, pp. 285-286. While in years past Dr. Mumford was an advocate of regionalism, his recent book, *The Condition of Man* (1944), frequently associates regionalism with nationalism and so questions rather than advocates the movement.

III

Regionalists point out that the essence of their movement is psychic, but they have failed to examine or to describe the qualities of the regional spirit which may or may not be worthy of political or administrative expression. The psychic qualities associated with regionalism are mentioned in numerous reports. For example, *Regional Planning, Part I—Pacific Northwest*, says, in part: "The ultimate test of homogeneity [from the standpoint of regionalism], even from the geographer's point of view, is therefore a psychic quality."¹⁴ Odum and Moore, in *American Regionalism*, deal with this factor as follows:

"Is there a regional history of America?" asks one group of students. The historian answers that there is. "Is there a regional psychology?" asks another. The literary and governmental folks have found out that there is. "Is there an average America?" asks still another group. Our foreign visitors and the statisticians tell us that there is not.¹⁵

Since psychological factors and psychological unity are stressed in reports dealing with regionalism, these qualities present legitimate fields of inquiry for research workers. Unfortunately, the mounting literature on regionalism neglects this field almost completely. It should not be necessary to point out here that social psychology is a well-established discipline with good research techniques and a wide choice of terms and terminology. Apparently social psychologists are prepared to serve the regionalists in determining the presence or absence of regional psychological unities and also in establishing whether the alleged unities will lead to desirable ends if given political or administrative expression.

Although regionalists have neglected the psychic qualities which they say accompany regionalism, writers in other fields have provided us with some interesting literature on the subject. Some of the better known works are Santayana's *The Last Puritan*, Cash's *The Mind of the South*, Glasgow's *Barren Ground*, and Roberts' *The Time of Man*. Interesting facets of psychological qualities are also presented in Couch's *Culture in the South* (and Lillian Smith's *Strange Fruit*). It is doubtful, however, that a careful searching of these books would establish a system of psychological values or outlooks that merit encouragement and perpetuation under the aegis of regionalism.

Novelists more than regionalists have explored and exploited folkways and what may be called "regional psychic qualities." It is interesting to note, therefore, that at least some of them realize that folk novels reflect a society in transition, not a society compartmentalized permanently in fixed molds. In reflecting on the novels of Faulkner,

¹⁴ P. 99.

¹⁵ P. 4.

Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, and others, Bettina Linn inquires, "Don't they give us, indeed, a feeling more of finality than of promise, the sense of a job done, and well done?"¹⁶ In these novels, the setting and the culture pattern are the important thing, for it is within the framework of these that the aspirations, defeats, and conflicts of the characters take place. But these special settings and folkways are giving way to the more cosmopolitan society of ideas and individual expressions. Future novels may be expected to be concerned increasingly with individuals and with the wind of universal doctrines rather than with folk attributes and aspirations. This change confirms the trend from the sacred to the secular society described above.

IV

Regionalists have failed to exorcise the bogey of sectionalism. Frederick Jackson Turner made us very much aware of sectional conflicts in this country, conflicts which grow out of what are conceived of as economic interests but which in the last analysis have nationalistic implications. Carried to their logical conclusion, sectional interests may lead to irredentist movements such as this country has experienced. The characteristics which Turner ascribes to sections can in large measure be ascribed also to several of the regions that have been projected in this country. Even the definition he formulated for *sectionalism* comes remarkably close to accepted definitions of *regionalism*. For example, Professor Turner writes:

I shall recognize as tests of sectionalism all of those methods by which a given area resists national uniformity, whether by mere opposition in public opinion on the part of a considerable area, or by formal protest, or by combining its votes in Congress and in presidential elections, and also those manifestations of economic and social separateness involved in the existence in a given region of a set of fundamental assumptions, a mental and emotional attitude which segregates the section from other sections or from the nation as a whole. Sooner or later such sectional influences find expression in politics or legislation, and they are even potential bases for forcible resistance.¹⁷

Compare the above criteria of sectionalism with the following definition of regionalism:

... "regionalism" is a clustering of environmental, economic, social, and governmental factors to such an extent that a distinct consciousness of separate identity within the whole, a need for autonomous planning, a manifestation of cultural peculiarities, and a desire for administrative freedom, are theoretically recognized and actually put into effect.¹⁸

Clearly a major problem confronting the regionalists is that of transforming the Mr. Hyde of sectionalism into the Dr. Jekyll of regional-

¹⁶ "The Fiction of the Future," *The Yale Review*, Dec., 1944.

¹⁷ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of Sections in American History* (1932), p. 288.

¹⁸ *Regional Factors of National Planning and Development* (National Resources Committee), p. 138.

ism. Research and experimentation might have been employed in an effort to move beyond this impasse, but the literature on regionalism shows no such effort. Instead, the dilemma has been resolved by rather arbitrary statements of definition, which have become almost a standard fixture in articles on regionalism. Odum and Moore distinguish between the two terms as follows:

. . . regionalism envisages the nation first, making the national culture and welfare the final arbiter. It is, therefore, essentially a co-operative concern. On the other hand, sectionalism sees the region first and the nation afterwards. It is, therefore, essentially a competitive emphasis. . . . Sectionalism emphasizes the autonomy inherent in political boundaries and state sovereignties. It confuses the state as a unity in the regional or national whole with the state as a separate entity. It emphasizes technical legislation, provincial interests, local loyalties. . . . Where sectionalism features separateness, regionalism connotes component and constituent parts of the larger national culture.¹⁹

At least for some of us it is difficult to understand how a study of our industrial society with its multiplicities of conflicts and rivalries can lead to premises such as these, the efforts of planners and academicians notwithstanding. Most people have never heard of regionalism, let alone embraced any of its utopian ideas. In the fields of manufacturing, commerce, agriculture, and labor we see intense competition and rivalry on every hand. This competition is reflected in a vast, intricate structure of legislation and controls dealing with our economy. More specifically, this competition is shown by our tariff legislation, by state barriers to trade, by our advertising industry, and by our well-known lobbying activities, some admittedly sectional. In these activities we find a picture not of harmony and spontaneous mutual service but of seeking for special advantages and even monopoly. It does not seem likely that planning or regionalism will modify them to any marked degree. Moreover, since regionalism does not deal with the working components of our society, namely, its functional groups, it cannot serve as a satisfactory basis for planning.

The easy distinctions made between sectionalism and regionalism have by no means resolved what some consider the problem of sectionalism. Both the definition and the geography of Turner's sections²⁰ fit most of the proposed regions only too well, and some advocates of

¹⁹ Odum and Moore, *American Regionalism* (1938), pp. 42-43. Apparently these distinctions were first stated by Dr. Odum in "Regionalism vs. Sectionalism in the South's Place in the National Economy," *Social Forces*, Vol. 12 (Mar., 1934), pp. 338-354.

²⁰ In *The Significance of Sections in American History*, Dr. Turner lists the following sections in the United States: New England, Middle States, Southeast, Southwest, Middle West, Great Plains, Mountain States, and Pacific Coast (pp. 315-316). Dr. Odum recognizes the following regions: Northeast, Southeast, Middle States, Southwest, Northwest, Far West. "Regionalism vs. Sectionalism in the South's Place in the National Economy," *op. cit.*, p. 347. See also Odum and Moore, *American Regionalism*, pp. 462-617. The National Resources Committee, in *Regional Factors in National Planning and Development* (p. 195), agreed on the following cities as regional centers: Boston (New England), New York (Eastern), Knoxville (Ozark-Appalachian), Atlanta (Southern), New Orleans (Gulf Coast), Chicago (Midwestern), Portland (Pacific Northwest), San Francisco (Pacific Southwest), and Denver (center for either or both Intermountain region and Great Plains).

regionalism²¹ or writers on regionalism²² are not confused by the old wine served in new bottles with new labels. For example, Donald Davidson, after quoting Dr. Odum's now famous definition, concludes:

The distinction must be granted so long as regionalism operates only as a technique of social study. But when regionalism goes into action and becomes not only a study but a working force, or even a doctrine, the distinction tends to break down. In the field of action the two terms are far from being opposed. They are complementary aspects of the same thing. Sectionalism is the political approach, and regionalism is the economic and cultural approach to an identical set of facts.

Regionalism and sectionalism meet, therefore at the point where action succeeds the compilation of data.²³

Since regionalists are clearly determined to operate in the political field, Davidson's interpretations are not reassuring to those who hold that sectionalism is far removed from regionalism.²⁴

V

If regionalism is to become an effective and constructive governmental arrangement, it must be demonstrated that there are categories of problems that can be handled to better advantage on a regional level than by existing governmental units. To date, no agreement exists regarding such categories of problems. Literature on the subject, however, makes it quite clear that regional organizations are to be preoccupied largely with economic problems—problems which the federal Constitution reserves largely to the federal government, an arrangement which has in general been eminently successful. Under the stimulus of a large market, American industry has expanded rapidly until this country has become the foremost industrial nation in the world. This achievement might well have been retarded if the powers delegated to the states had encompassed more authority in industry and commerce, as is shown by the many complicated barriers to trade

²¹ See, for instance, Donald Davidson, "Where Regionalism and Sectionalism Meet," *Social Forces*, Vol. 13 (Oct., 1934), pp. 23-31.

²² See William Allen White, "Unity and American Leadership," *The Yale Review*, Sept., 1942, pp. 1-17.

²³ "Where Regionalism and Sectionalism Meet," *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

²⁴ Other revealing statements from Mr. Davidson's article follow: "This is not the place to consider why we ever labored under the delusion that it was otherwise with us [speaking of the differences among people in various parts of the country]. The delusion now seems to be passing, and with its passing the sociologist, who is the student of cultures, has come into a vastly important new field. With his colleagues, the economist and the geographer, he is studying the areas of differentiation which historians have hitherto called *sections*. But the terms *section* and *sectionalism* seem too loose and political to win acceptance from the practicing scientist. The scientist wants a scientific term; in particular he wants to escape the taint of war and confusion that hangs about the older words. Therefore, he uses the words *region* and *regionalism* and proceeds to develop a new method of studying American life.

"Of all the Americans who are affected by this turn of affairs, the Southerner is naturally the quickest to rejoice. All the time he has known that the South is unlike other parts of the nation. . . .

"The New Regionalism, as it is now often called, is thus a powerful confirmation of the justice of the old southern claims, and perhaps also of the desirability of maintaining the

that have been erected by the states, creating interstate rivalries, conflicts, and friction.²⁵

Regionalism may come about either by compacts among states or under the framework of federal laws. In spite of alleged regional solidarities, the number of working compacts in this country is still small. For this reason regions as federal units appear more promising. As federal units, regional agencies will intrude themselves into the economic sphere. Such intrusions are inevitable if regional agencies are to attack the many problems that are so frequently associated with regions and for the relief of which they are advocated. Strength through size, in combination with inflated regional loyalties—of which we hear so much—may well lead to new forms of trade barriers and to new and powerful forces of privilege. This is particularly likely if some local interests fail to become imbued with the idealism of regionalism, and merely use the new arrangement to seek selfish objectives.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult to point out where local, national, and international economies merge. In fact, true local economies are almost a thing of the past. This means that it is on the national and international levels that stresses in our economy are registered, and it is on these levels that controls and regulations must be exercised. This has become particularly true since the advent of price controls and production controls. Any new interposition of governmental authority between the federal government and its parts can therefore only serve to complicate an orderly development and control of our economy. Unless regionalists can clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of their device, regionalism must stand condemned as an unnecessary complication, unsuited for adoption.

VI

Technology is universal, is rapidly becoming dominant, and will eventually prevail over discordant folkways, which regionalism would apparently try to discover and perpetuate.

Developments in recent decades have made it abundantly clear that technology is world wide and is a prime force establishing levels of accomplishment for those who wish to survive or prevail. Not only must the dominant nations produce vast amounts of material of intricate design, but these materials must excel. Such production has

differentiations that once were damned and dismissed as sectional. Not without significance, too, is the notable fact that the study of regions has proceeded most enthusiastically and fruitfully in the section which once went to the length of fighting for its independence." *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 24. See also his article "The Political Economy of Regionalism" in *American Review*, Vol. 6 (Feb., 1936), pp. 410-434.

²⁵ F. Eugene Melder, "Trade Barriers between States," *Annals* (American Academy of Political and Social Science), Vol. 207 (Jan., 1940), pp. 54-61.

outmoded handicraft or stylized folkway methods. There are no folkways in the application of electronics, medicine, chemistry, physics, or even in the mass production of superior fiber or cloth. Our industrial civilization will be built more and more on mass production of goods made according to a calculated scale or scientific formula. Desire for these goods calls for planned production and integrated activity on the part of all who desire them. Obviously, these common goods will become more and more standardized, and this standardization will serve to remove the psychic differences among people who use them. While the complete dominance of technology may seem remote, the movement in this direction is clear and unmistakable. Any program or institution which impedes this unifying process will only sustain for a longer period the instability, friction, and discordance which accompany its attainment.

The prospect of a large society relatively free of peculiar folkways and traditions may be condemned by some on the basis of mass monotony, or the absence of folk-differences which lend a certain fascination to travel, study, or association. However, such a society will make possible a fuller development and greater variety of individual personalities as contrasted with the stylized personalities which are the product of regional folk cultures. The distinguishing characteristics of the stylized personality will likely be treated as personal maladjustments whenever regional lines are crossed or when a cosmopolitan society is entered.

That traditions and folkways have special appeal for both the unsophisticated and the sophisticated is understandable. However, tradition is not self-beholding and self-evaluating. Nor does it encourage objectivity with respect to unlike traditions and cultures; instead it is given to moral judgment and intolerance. With increasing understanding and objectivity tradition as such declines and eventually ceases to exist as a distinct entity. It gives way to a type of cosmopolitanism without creed or color. This development, once it becomes widespread, has much to recommend it, for folkways and tradition, through compartmentalization and segmentation of the world society, have been the source of constant frictions, rivalries, and even wars. After a breaking down of these barriers and differences, the world society may contemplate more rational actions in the future. While this prospect is not an immediate one, it may well be delayed further by the proposals of regionalists.